

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:**

Please insert the following paragraph on page 9 at line 3.

Fig. 1A shows an enlarged partial section of the distribution valve of Fig. 1 in the closed position.

Please insert the following paragraph on page 9 at line 10.

Fig 3A shows an enlarged partial section of the distribution valve of Fig. 3 in the intermediate position.

Please insert the following paragraph on page 9 at line 18.

Fig. 5A shows an enlarged partial section of the distribution valve of Fig. 5 in the opening position.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 10 at line 12 with the following amended paragraph.

The valve piston 12 is fitted with a valve cone 15, which is provided on a bottom surface of a cone surface ring 16 located on the external wall face of the valve piston 12. In the valve seat mounting 11 a closing spring 17 is located that surrounds the valve piston 12. In the closed position of the distribution valve 10 represented here, the closing spring 17 presses against an upper face of the cone surface ring 16 and thus brings the valve cone 15 into sealing contact with a conical surface of a sealing ring 18. The valve seat mounting 11 comprises a stepped location section 19, in which the sealing ring 18 together with a ~~retaining~~ retention ring 20 are clamped in a form fit manner. To achieve an excellent sealing effect with appropriate tolerances the sealing ring 18 is preferably made of a high strength plastic, while the ~~retaining~~ retention ring 20 is preferably manufactured out of a steel.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 10 at line 26 with the following amended paragraph.

As can be easily discerned from FIG. 1 as well, the retention ring 20 surrounds the sealing ring 18 on the side that its facing away from the piston sealing face of the sealing ring 18 with an inward chamfered ring mounting 22 in a form fit manner, such that the sealing ring 18 is positioned very reliably in the valve seat mounting 11. Moreover the location section 19 of the valve seat mounting 11 in conjunction with the steel ~~retaining~~ retention ring 20 is so configured that a clamping force exerted by the screw fixing (not shown) via the control piston guide 14 does not act on the plastic sealing ring 18.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 11, line 13 through page 12, line 12 with the following amended paragraph.

The hollow cylindrical valve piston 12 comprises a first radial aperture 29 and a second radial aperture 28, that preferably are configured in each case as radial holes or as radial cut-outs in the valve piston wall. Here the second radial hole is so configured in the valve piston 12, that in the closed position of the distribution valve it lies opposite to a valve piston guide 20A configured on the inner wall surface of the retention ring; it therefore lies with the whole of its hole cross-section at the same height as the retention ring 20, and is blocked by the latter as far as possible. With an actuation of the distribution valve and a corresponding displacement of the valve piston 12 (upward in Fig. 1) the second radial hole 28 remains located on the high pressure side. As can be clearly discerned from Fig. 1, the valve piston 12 is thus guided without seals in the valve seat mounting 11 along a surface of the retention ring 20 facing the valve piston 12 between the high pressure port P and the return port R, i.e. without sealing rings or similar. Moreover, the separation or tolerance between the outer wall of the valve piston 12 and the valve piston guide surface 20A of the retaining ring 20 facing the valve piston 12 is chosen such that it forms at this location a narrow clearance as a clearance seal, through which the hydraulic fluid can flow in a restricted manner. Both in the closed position of the distribution valve shown in Fig. 1 and also during the later

displacement of the valve piston 12 this clearance remains as a restricting section, however the overlap of the outer wall section 12A between the two radial apertures 28, 29 and the valve piston guide face 20A increases with displacement of the valve piston 12, as in particular the end position of the valve piston 12 in Fig. 5 shows, so that because of the greater length of the clearance the sealing effect of the clearance seal also increases (see Figs. 1A, 3A and 5A). In what follows this clearance between the outer wall 12A of the valve piston 12 and the surface 20A on the retaining ring 20 is identified in brief as a restricting section. The first radial hole 29 of the valve piston 12 is configured on the tank side of the second radial hole 28, such that it is located in alignment with the return port R. The control piston guide 14 comprises aperture openings 30, which correspond with the return port R. In like manner the valve seat mounting 11 comprises aperture openings 31, which correspond with the high pressure port P.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 13 at line 27 with the following amended paragraph.

The control piston 13 comprises in its forward part, facing the valve piston 12, a control piston shaft 36, which with the displacement of the control piston 13 into its intermediate position overlaps the first radial hole 29 and thereby closes it. The tolerances between the forward end of the control piston shaft 36 and the part of the valve piston adjoining the second radial hole 28 are appropriately selected with regard to a sufficient sealing effect. As a result the fluid connection between the load port A and the return port R through the first radial hole 29 is interrupted, so that the hydraulic fluid flowing back from the ram can no longer gain easy access back to the tank through the first radial hole 29; at most it can gain access via a restricting section between the first radial aperture 29 and the control piston 13. The control piston 13 can also seal off the first aperture ~~[[28]]~~ 29 completely. The hydraulic fluid is then forced to move through the second radial hole 28 that is still open and lying axially displaced in the direction of the open end face 26 of the valve piston 12, and subsequently through the single or further restricting section there formed. As can be further discerned from FIG. 3, an annular clearance 37 is formed within the control piston guide 14 in the intermediate

position of the control piston 13 above the control piston shaft 36. The hydraulic fluid flowing back from the ram, which has passed through the second radial hole 28 and through the restricting section can furthermore flow back via the annular clearance 37 and through the flow opening 30 to the tank, i.e. to the return port R. Thus is ensured a soft forward or return travel of the ram with the advantages cited above.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 15 at line 24 with the following amended paragraph.

After the lift-off of the valve cone 15 from the sealing ring 18 a large clearance forms immediately between these two components so that the aperture between the high pressure port P and the second radial hole 28 is essentially unrestricted and a large quantity of hydraulic fluid can flow through. In this way the distribution valve comprises a rapid response characteristic when actuated. Since with the lift-off of the valve cone 15, or the cone face ring 16, from the sealing ring 18 hydraulic fluid can access the ~~bottom surface~~ bottom surface of the cone face ring 16, an equalisation of pressure occurs with the result that further actuation of the valve piston 12 takes place in a prompt and rapid manner as required. At the same time it is possible with the lift-off of the valve cone 15 to avoid disadvantageous pressure shocks, since the inflowing hydraulic fluid can similarly gain access downward to the restricting section and can furthermore gain access back to the tank through the annular clearance 37, not yet closed, and the aperture opening 30. The plastic sealing ring 18 is sealed with respect to the valve seat mounting 11 by means of an O-ring 21 inserted between the latter and the sealing ring 18; this effectively prevents pressure from the high pressure fluid fed from the high pressure port P from building up behind the plastic sealing ring 18.